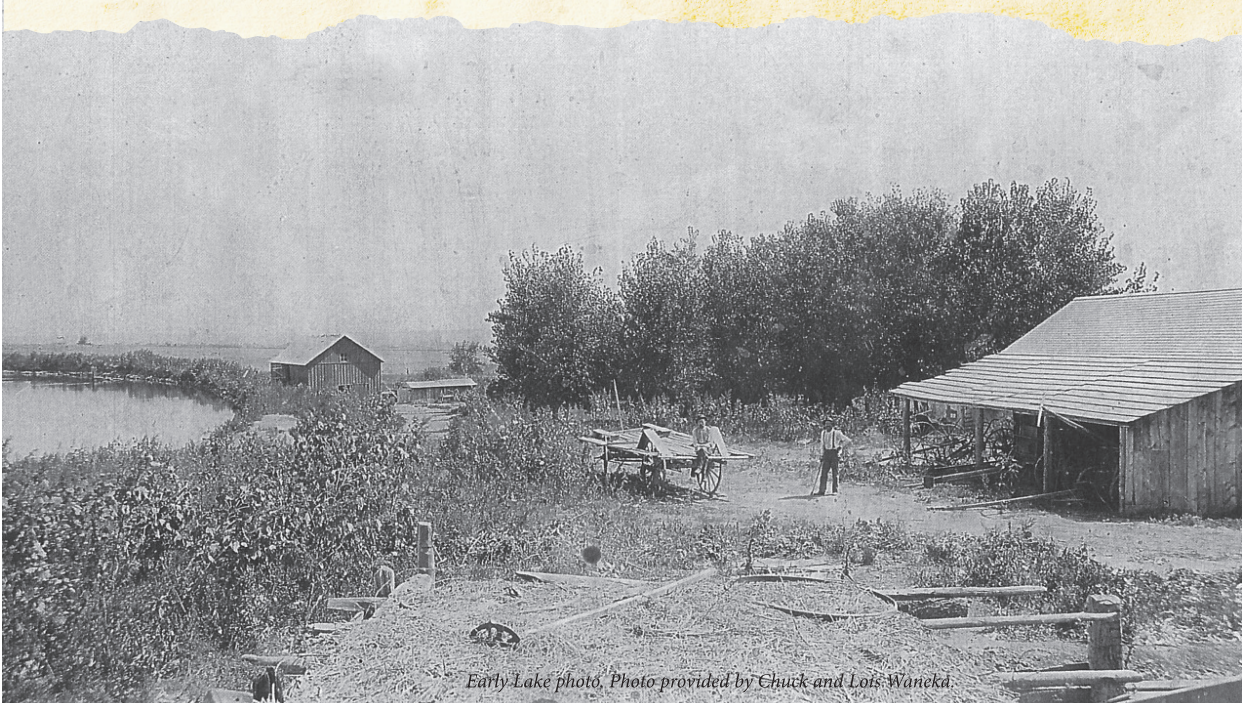




# walking self-tour

*Historical Lafayette*



*Early Lake photo. Photo provided by Chuck and Lois Waneka.*

## *A Self-Guided Tour of the Waneka Lake Area*

Explore the Rich History of the City of Lafayette  
Waneka Lake Park and Thomas & Greenlee  
Open Spaces with a self-guided tour.







*The panoramic view from Waneka Lake today.*



*This was a coal-fired power plant that used coal from a variety of sources including the "Plant Mine" on the west side of the lake. Photo provided by Chuck and Lois Waneka.*



# *A Story of People and Land*

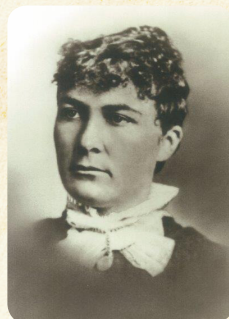
## **Introduction**

Waneka Lake Park and the contiguous Greenlee Wildlife Preserve and Thomas Open Space have an amazing story to tell! This land has provided the food, water, energy and shelter that people have needed to live through the ages. In turn, human activities (including those of today's residents) have made this place what it is today.

Very little is known about the Indian history in this immediate location. Perhaps the earliest people visited the natural spring, the source of water for the original pond in this area. This pond was used for irrigation and ice-harvesting. It was owned by a string of early settlers that included Adolf Waneka and his son Henry, as well as Mary Miller, the founder of Lafayette.

One colorful figure in Lafayette's history draws the stories of Waneka Lake, Thomas Open Space and Greenlee Wildlife Preserve together through familial ties: Adolf and Anna Waneka's daughter, Anna. Because she was married to W.J. Thomas for many years (and had 9 children with him!), she is found in historical accounts most often as Anna Thomas or Anna Waneka Thomas. But, after the death of W.J. Thomas, she married Frank Greenley (Greenlee) and that family's story became more closely identified with this area.

The lake and land were purchased in 1906 by the Northern Colorado Power Company. The lake was enlarged and an electric power station (one of the earliest in the Western U.S.) was built. According to an article in the Denver Times, the powerplant was "the largest between Chicago and Ogden."



*Adolf and Anna Waneka  
c. 1870. Photos provided by  
Chuck and Lois Waneka,  
City of Lafayette.*







Waneka  
in the  
Lake  
1890's

*Photo provided by Chuck  
and Lois Waneka.*

# walking self-tour

## How To Get Started

This self-guiding pamphlet accompanies you as you walk around Waneka Lake and see/visit Open Spaces on the north side of the lake.

The first stop is in front of the boathouse near the parking lot at the South West entrance to Waneka Lake. Start at the rope fence just off the main trail and follow the directions to subsequent stops.

The route is a **1.7 mile**, counter-clockwise circle of the lake. As you travel you will become familiar with the four directions. The boathouse is on the south side of the lake. Start the tour by walking east.

- See the map on pages 3 and 4 of this handout.
- Also see the **LEARN A PLANT** feature at each stop.



### LEARN A PLANT

Plants are our link to the sun;  
Earth's power plants!

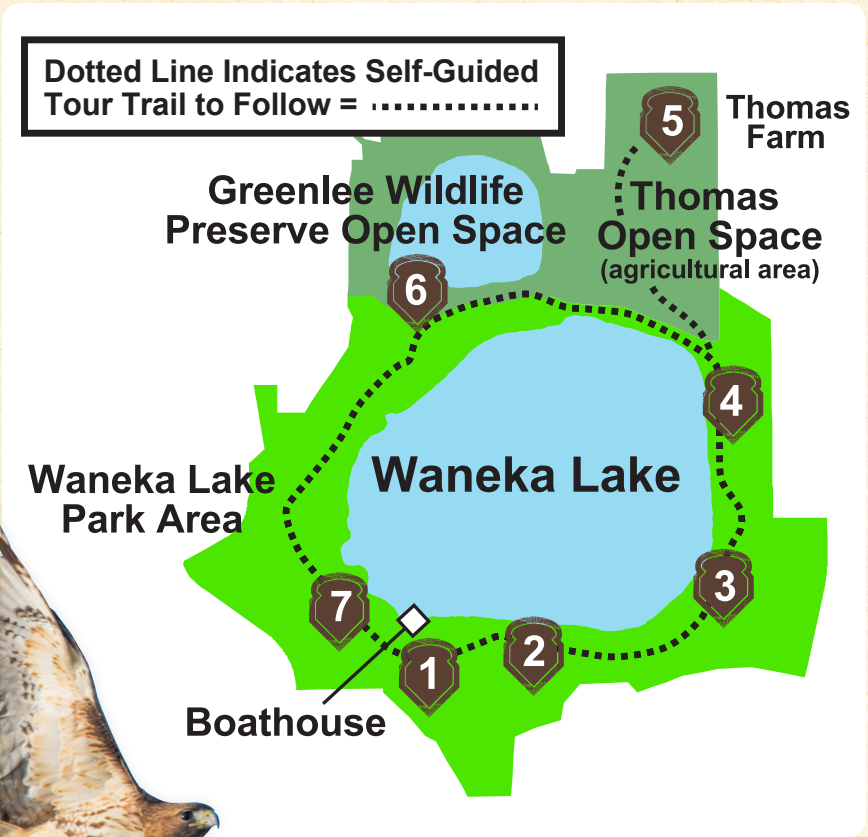


# Follow The Map

Follow this map along with instructions on the page for each step to navigate this self-guided tour.

Waneka Lake and much of the land surrounding it comprise a Lafayette city park devoted to recreation. Greenlee Wildlife Preserve and Thomas Open Space properties have been preserved for their conservation and environmental values. Together, these two types of public properties share an amazing story and provide lessons for our future.

# Explore the 7 Stops of the Self-Guided Tour





## STOP 1

### The Boathouse

The boathouse you see in front of you was built in 2009. The first boathouse, built in 1988, was lost in a fire. During the summer, canoes and whimsical paddleboats can be rented to explore the lake and enjoy some time on the water.



Long before the boathouse, however, the **coal-fired power plant** stood on this very location! Built in 1907, this was one of the first power plants west of the Mississippi. The large, reddish pitted rock just behind the rope fence is a cinder or “clinker”—a by-product of burning coal in the power plant.

Some of these clinkers were used for landscaping at the boathouse, but a large number of monstrous cinders are found in the field across from the parking lot. They were transported out of the plant on railcars and dumped in their present position. These cinders—humanmade igneous rocks containing incidental materials such as brick—glowed red-hot at night according to witnesses of the time.



#### LEARN A PLANT

The evergreen next to the boathouse is a Blue Spruce.



“Clinkers” (by-products of coal burning)  
Photos provided by Martin Ogle.



# 2

## STOP 2

### Energy

**Substation**—if you look past the cinder block building to the south (away from the lake), you will see an **electrical substation**. It is located just beyond a field full of the cinders from the power plant, like the ones you saw at the boathouse.

Substations are a critical part of the energy delivery system. They transform very high voltage electricity from a power plant to lower voltages used in homes and businesses. The substation near Waneka Lake is owned and operated by XCEL energy and distributes electricity to much of Lafayette. Our closest electrical generation plant is Valmont Power Plant, but a growing number of solar electric arrays including city-owned systems in Lafayette deliver electricity to our community.



Substation with “clinkers” (by-products of coal burning) in foreground. Photo provided by Martin Ogle.



#### LEARN A PLANT

**Grasses**—the most common grass in this area is a non-native pasture grass called smooth brome grass.





## STOP 3

### Granary

In its relatively elevated position, it seems strange that a lake can occur here. Thanks to ditches and pumped water, Lafayette citizens can enjoy great scenery, fishing, boating and other benefits that Waneka Lake provides. The Goodhue ditch flows into Waneka Lake on the southwest side, just west of the playground. Water also comes from the Davidson Ditch on the north side of the lake, and is pumped in through a pipe from Lafayette's Goose Haven Reservoir complex.

The concrete structure with railings that you passed on the way to this stop was the housing for Waneka Lake's "**lower valve**" which controlled flow into the irrigation ditch that begins below the dam at this point.

Turn to the East and look below the dam to see an old wooden building in a grove of trees. This is a **granary** that was originally built in the Waneka Lake area in the late 1870s's. When this land was purchased by the power company in the early 1900s, the Wanekas moved this building to their farm (see photo on the next page) near what is now "Sprouts" on South Boulder Road. After Waneka Lake was developed as a park, the granary was moved back to this land and was placed on the Lafayette Register of Historic Properties in 2001. (Visit building before getting back on self-guided path if you wish). **Proceed on path to the Northwest.**



#### DID YOU KNOW?

Milkweed attracts monarch butterflies



#### LEARN A PLANT

Plants growing along rocks by lake:  
*Showy Milkweed* (notice see pods growing on or on last year's plants).  
Trees growing near granary:  
*peach-leaved willows* with narrow, slightly curled leaves.







*Granary storage facility. Photo provided by the City of Lafayette.*



*Gus Waneka farm, mid-1900s.  
Photo provided by Chuck and Lois Waneka.*







## STOP 4

### Indian Peaks View



*The panoramic view from Waneka Lake.*

Look to the west. From this vantage-point, we can fully appreciate the mountains of the front range and the tremendous amount of water they store and deliver to plains communities. Except in drought years, there is always some snow visible even at the end of summer. From here, you can see the peaks of Rocky Mountain National Park (Longs Peak at 14,259 feet is the 15th tallest mountain in Colorado) and the Indian Peaks south of Longs.



*The spillway. Photo provided by the City of Lafayette.*



#### LEARN A PLANT

Annual sunflower.  
This native plant is an important food source for birds in late summer.

**Proceed about 200+ yards to where trail turns to West. Then take the dirt foot path .3 miles along the side of the Thomas Open Space field to reach the Thomas Farm Stand and Barn.**





## STOP 5

### Thomas Open Space Farm

Thomas Open Space Farm is a Lafayette open space property. Set aside as agricultural land in 2002, it reflects a community value of preserving local agriculture. According to the Denver Post, Colorado lost 1.26 million acres of agricultural land between 1997 and 2002. This was mostly due to large acreage residential developments.



*Thomas Open Space. Photo by Martin Ogle.*

The City of Lafayette has partnered with a local organic farmer that operates the farm and sells a wide variety of organic vegetable crops at the on-site barn. The property is funded by the POST (Parks, Open Space and Trails) fund—0.25% of all purchases made in Lafayette.



*Solar panels. Photo by Martin Ogle.*

Notice the array of solar panels located south of the barn at Thomas Open Space. This 9 kilowatt system was installed in 2012 to supplement energy use at the barn and is part of Lafayette's contribution to the electric grid as discussed at stop #2. These solar panels remind us that ultimately, almost all energy we use comes from the sun. Agriculture, which fuels our bodies, derives its energy from the sun. All fossil fuels which came from plants that grew millions of years ago derived their energy initially from the sun.



#### LEARN A PLANT

Crops! Crops grown here include: kale, tomatoes, chard, mixed greens, beets, spinach, peppers, cucumbers, carrots and others.

**From Thomas Open Space follow the trail back up to the main Waneka Lake path and proceed about 300-400 yards to turnoff for Greenlee Wildlife Preserve on right.**



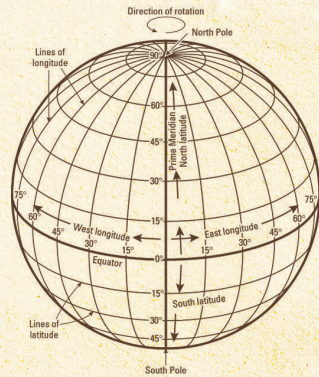


The City of Lafayette offers an incredible art scene and the newest work will be located right on Thomas Open Space to honor the unique location the city holds along the 40th parallel latitude line.

# 40° North



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Thomas Open Space falls on the **40th parallel latitude line**. Look for the sculpture by Geoffrey Newton Metalworks, featuring a compass.



*The illustrated design plan for Lafayette's new public artwork by Geoffrey Newton Metalworks.*



# 6

## STOP 6

### Greenlee Wildlife Preserve (walk up side path to viewing platform)

Greenlee Wildlife Preserve was probably named after the husband of Anna Waneka Thomas, Frank Greenlee, who lived at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries. It was designated as Lafayette open space to preserve the area for its ecosystem values and benefits to wildlife, especially local and migratory birds. Access is provided to the fringes of the marsh to allow educational and recreational opportunities without adverse impacts to wildlife. The marsh at Greenlee receives water from the Goodhue Ditch and storm runoff but is not directly connected to Waneka Lake.



*Greenlee Wildlife Preserve.  
Photo by The City of Lafayette.*

***Have you ever wondered how a marsh and a swamp differ?*** A marsh is a shallow wetland that has non-woody vegetation—like cattails emerging from the water. A swamp is a wetland with trees and other woody vegetation growing out of it. In Colorado, marshes are much more common than swamps. Both of these wetlands provide wonderful habitat for birds and other animals. Greenlee Wildlife Preserve is an excellent place to see waterfowl in the winter and blackbirds and other wildlife during summer.

**Proceed back to trail, continue west to complete the loop around the lake.** As you walk along the path on the west side of the lake imagine the small, original lake that was filled with water that bubbled from a spring. The west side of the lake was also the site of a long-defunct and short-lived coal mine known as “Plant Mine”.

#### LEARN A PLANT

Broad-leaved cattail provides habitat for Red-winged Blackbirds, Yellow-headed Blackbirds and other wildlife.



*Red-winged blackbird Illustration,  
by Charles Almanzo Babcock.*





## STOP 7

### Silver Maple

We hope this guided walk has left you with a sense of how our human lives are entwined with the land, water and resources of the Earth. Arriving at the playground, imagine a bygone era in which peoples' lives were directly tied to this lake, its natural resources, human-made facilities and the surrounding land.

Find the silver maple in the old and recent photographs (below). The children in the older picture lived in a power company house that was located where the playground is today. The large silver maples, that still shade the playground, were planted in 1906 to provide shade for the residents of these houses.



*Ross family photo.*



*The silver maple tree still stands. Photos from History of Waneka Lake, by Andrew Patten, Jr.*

Waneka Lake, nearby agricultural lands, coal mines, streams and ditches, wildlife habitat, and other elements of this place have determined the nature of our human lives here for many years! The power plant was the first alternating-current plant west of the Mississippi and east of the Sierra Mountains, and is an important part of that story.



#### LEARN A PLANT

Silver maple—a tree from the eastern U.S. that has been widely planted in Lafayette. In warm months, notice deeply cleft leaves.





## Additional Historic Lafayette Walking Tours

Explore historic sites and architecture in Lafayette by taking one of the self-guided walking tours listed below. *More information is available about these tours at [www.cityoflafayette.com/index.aspx?md=857](http://www.cityoflafayette.com/index.aspx?md=857)*

- Women with Impact
- First Union
- Old Town Walking Tour
- Old Town Lafayette Architecture Tour
- Historic Lafayette Walking Tour
- 2014 Landmark Walking Tour

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## Suggested Further Reading

Patten, A.R. (2006). *History of Waneka Lake*. Lafayette, Colorado.

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The trail guide booklet is funded by the POST (Parks, Open Space and Trails) fund.

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*Be a Part of It...*







# walking self-tour



*Construction of the "Plant Lake" (Waneka Lake). Frank Greenlee with Fresno Scraper hitched to a team of horses.*

## *A Self-Guided Tour of the Waneka Lake Area*

Waneka  
Lake  
in the  
1890's

South Boulder Road